

work away from the cities. It has been my experience that there is a very great need for post-graduate work.

It is very easy for a clever nurse in a good field where she has made her reputation just to go on indefinitely, unless professional pride prevents, when the opportunities open for post-graduate work are so unattractive.

I should be very glad to hear an expression of opinion on the subject through the JOURNAL.

V. V. H.

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DEAR EDITOR: The midwife question in America as compared to other countries is not quite as simple a matter to us as may seem at first.

In Little Italy, on the upper East Side, the midwives "flourish as the green bay-tree," and consequently numbers of unnecessary deaths follow in their wake, and yet up to the present time in New York State there seems no way of stopping the practice, even of the most ignorant among them.

Called to a case in the district mentioned above a short time ago, the patient was found to be a young woman of eighteen who had given birth to twins six days previously. Three days after confinement septi-cæmia developed, but not until three more days had passed did the midwife in charge consent to a doctor being called. He at once curetted, and found that one placenta had been retained in the uterus. Close questioning of the midwife disclosed the fact of her entire ignorance of two placentas under the existing circumstances.

The case was reported to the Board of Health, and the reply was as follows:

"In answer to your favor of the 17th inst. I beg to inform you that there is no such thing as a licensed midwife in this city or State. Strange as it may appear, there is no law compelling a midwife to pass an examination or procure a license in order to follow out her calling. If you will furnish me with any information that shows malpractice on her part in any particular instance, I will be only too glad to try and bring her to justice."

Is not this a problem that we, as a body of nurses, might help solve?

ROSABELLE JACOBUS.

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DEAR EDITOR: I have been reading with a great deal of interest the articles you publish in regard to the employment of untrained nurses by physicians. This is very much to be regretted, but do you not think that sometimes the trouble lies with nurses themselves?

I have been in private practice for a number of years and was

trained at a school noted for its discipline, where absolute loyalty to the physician was insisted upon. When working with other nurses I have been very much surprised to see how freely they criticise the doctor's treatment, even to the friends of the family. I have in mind a case in which a doctor stubbornly held to his diagnosis in the face of great opposition from all quarters. He placed confidence in his nurse, and not until the patient was well and the doctor triumphant was it found out that she—the nurse—had attempted to diagnose the case herself, imparting her fears to the friends of the patient, saying that she thought the doctor was mistaken, at the same time telling them to say nothing to him about her opinions. You may imagine the state of mind of the patient's friends: and this from a graduate of a reputable hospital. Another young nurse, when ordered by the doctor to give tepid baths to a delicate child suffering from typhoid, gave the baths cold, remarking that "nurses knew a great deal more than doctors about such things and cold water was better." The same nurse declined to feed her patient during the night, saying that "sleep was better than food," when, as a matter of fact, the "sleep" was simply the torpor of typhoid. That doctors often prefer women of limited intelligence who will do as they are told and hold their tongues is not to be wondered at.

Then there is the nurse who has such an exalted idea of her own importance that she requires a great deal of waiting on, really causing a great deal of discomfort in a modest household. All things of this sort prejudice people against trained nurses, and so the great body of careful, unselfish women, with the good of the race at heart, has to suffer because of the unwise conduct of the few.

The writer has a patient whom she has often nursed. Being busy, another nurse was called in at one time. In reference to her service the patient said, "If Miss —— had been the only trained nurse I had ever employed, I should never have had another one in the house, for she would have given me such an unpleasant idea about them all."

Surely this is not as it should be—it certainly is not what we are taught in our training-schools; we ought to be a vital necessity, instead of infliction to be dreaded.

A WESTERN NURSE.

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[LETTERS to the editor must be accompanied by the name in full and address of the writer, otherwise such communications cannot be recognized. The name need not appear in the JOURNAL unless so desired.—ED.]

